

CHARLOTTE-
MECKLENBURG
**ANNUAL COUNT OF
SHELTERED HOMELESSNESS**
2015

March 2017

PREPARED BY:

University of
North Carolina
at Charlotte
Urban Institute

PREPARED FOR:

The Housing Advisory Board of
Charlotte-Mecklenburg

FUNDING PROVIDED BY:

Mecklenburg County Community
Support Services

The Housing Advisory Board of Charlotte-Mecklenburg (HAB), formerly known as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Coalition for Housing, is a volunteer appointed board charged with educating, advocating, engaging and partnering with community stakeholders to end and prevent homelessness and ensure a sufficient supply of affordable housing throughout the community. Members are appointed by the Mayor, City Council and the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners. HAB looks to national best practices and local research to make its recommendations to community stakeholders and providers, and advocates and advises on a strategic level to reduce homelessness and increase affordable housing. In addition, HAB is responsible for the governance of the Continuum of Care in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, which carries out activities as specified in 24 CFR part 578.5(b) of the Federal Register of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The UNC Charlotte Urban Institute is a nonpartisan, applied research and community outreach center at UNC Charlotte. Founded in 1969, it provides services including technical assistance and training in operations and data management; public opinion surveys; and research and analysis around economic, environmental, and social issues affecting the Charlotte region.

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

- 4 | AUTHORS & REVIEWERS
- 5 | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
- 6 | ABOUT
- 7 | KEY DEFINITIONS
- 8 | INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

- 9 | DATA & METHODOLOGY
- 10 | PIT COUNT VS. HMIS
- 11 | LIMITATIONS

FINDINGS

- 12 | SUMMARY
- 13 | 2015 OVERVIEW
- 14 | INDIVIDUALS
- 16 | HOUSEHOLDS WITH ADULT & CHILD
- 18 | VETERANS

APPENDIX

- 20 | DATA TABLES

Authors & Reviewers

AUTHORS

Ashley Williams Clark, MCRP

Assistant Director
Institute for Social Capital
UNC Charlotte Urban Institute

Justin Lane, MA

Data and Research Specialist
UNC Charlotte Urban Institute

WITH ASSISTANCE FROM

Angelique Marcus, MURP

Social Research Specialist
UNC Charlotte Urban Institute

REVIEWERS

Helen Lipman, Mecklenburg County Community
Support Services

Stacy Lowry, Mecklenburg County Community
Support Services, Housing Advisory Board

Courtney Morton, Mecklenburg County Community
Support Services

Amy Hawn Nelson, UNC Charlotte Urban Institute,
Housing Advisory Board

Rebecca Pfeiffer, City of Charlotte Neighborhood &
Business Services

ADDITIONAL INPUT PROVIDED BY

Housing Advisory Board of Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Research & Evaluation Committee
Community Engagement and Advocacy Committee

Acknowledgements

FUNDING PROVIDED BY:

Mecklenburg County Community Support Services



MANY THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT OF:

Charlotte City Council
City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services
Homeless Services Network
Housing Advisory Board of Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners
Mecklenburg County Community Support Services

About

The 2016 Housing Instability & Homelessness Report Series is a collection of local reports designed to better equip our community to make data-informed decisions around housing instability and homelessness. Utilizing local data and research, these reports are designed to provide informative and actionable research to providers, funders, public officials and the media as well as the general population.

The 2016 Spotlight Report on Family Homelessness and the 2016 Annual Count Report will be released in 2017. The 2017 Housing Instability & Homelessness Report Series will begin with the 2017 Point-in-Time Count Report scheduled for release in Spring 2017.

In 2014, the Housing Advisory Board of Charlotte-Mecklenburg outlined four key reporting areas that, together, comprised an annual series of reports for community stakeholders. The four areas include:

1. POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

An annual snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness in Mecklenburg County. This local report is similar to the national report on Point-in-Time Count numbers, and provides descriptive information about both the sheltered and unsheltered population experiencing homelessness on one night in January.

2. ANNUAL COUNT OF SHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

An annual count of the population experiencing sheltered homelessness over twelve months. Like the Point-in-Time Count Report, this local report is similar to the national report on annual counts of sheltered homelessness, providing descriptive information about the population experiencing sheltered homelessness throughout the year. The Point-in-Time Count and Annual Count Reports are complements, and together help paint a picture of homelessness and trends in our community.

3. HOUSING INSTABILITY

An annual report focusing on the characteristics and impact of housing instability in the community. During the 2016 reporting cycle, this report will feature innovative affordable housing development strategies that other communities have implemented.

4. SPOTLIGHT

An annual focus on a trend or specific population within housing instability and homelessness. During the 2016 reporting cycle, this report will focus on households with adults and children experiencing homelessness within Mecklenburg County.

The 2016 reporting cycle is completed by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. Mecklenburg County Community Support Services provided funding for the report series.

Key Definitions

These definitions are based on guidelines from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Child Only Households

Households where all members are under the age of 18.

Chronically Homeless

Individual or head of household with a disability who lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and who has either been continuously homeless for at least 12 months or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years where the combined occasions total at least 12 months. Occasions are separated by a break of at least seven nights. Stays in institutions of fewer than 90 days do not constitute a break.

Continuum of Care (CoC)

Local planning body responsible for coordinating the full range of homelessness services in a geographic area, which may cover a city, county, metropolitan area, or even an entire state.

Emergency / Seasonal Housing (ES)

A facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for homeless people.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

A software application designed to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless people. Each CoC maintains its own HMIS, which can be tailored to meet local needs, but must also conform to HUD's HMIS Data and Technical Standards.

Households with Adults and Children

People who are homeless as part of households that have at least one adult and one child under the age of 18.

Households with Adults Only

Households with single adults and adult couples unaccompanied by children under the age of 18.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC)

A report on the capacity to house persons who are homeless.

Individual

A person who is not part of a family with children during an episode of homelessness. Individuals may be homeless as single adults, unaccompanied youth, or in multiple-adult or multiple-child households.

Parenting Youth

Youth (under age 25) who identify as the parent or legal guardian of one or more children who are present with or sleeping in the same place as that youth parent.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Designed to provide housing and supportive services on a long-term basis to formerly homeless people. This is considered permanent housing.

Point-in-Time Count (PIT)

An unduplicated one-night estimate of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations.

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)

A program that provides financial assistance and services to help those experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. This is considered permanent housing.

Transitional Housing (TH)

A program that provides temporary housing and supportive services for up to 24 months with the intent for the person to move towards permanent housing.

Sheltered Homeless People

People who are living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals.)

Unaccompanied Youth

People who are not part of a family during their episode of homelessness and who are between the ages of 18 and 24.

Unsheltered Homeless People

People with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Veteran

Someone who has served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States.

Introduction

At a national level, data on homelessness are reported in HUD's Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. The data provided in the report are then used to make policy and funding decisions. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Annual Count report serves as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community's local report.

This report provides estimates of homelessness on one night and throughout the year using data from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Point-In-Time (PIT) Count and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The PIT Count provides estimates on the number of people experiencing homelessness in a shelter or unsheltered in a place unfit for human habitation on one night in January. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg HMIS data provide the number of people served by an emergency shelter or transitional housing throughout the year.

This local report provides an overview of the estimated number and characteristics of people who experienced homelessness in 2015 in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina. Due to data quality, comparisons are only made with 2014 data. There are two data sources that mainly inform this report:

The data provided are intended to be estimates that describe the people experiencing homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, but are not intended to provide explanations as to *why* people are experiencing homelessness—that narrative can be shaped by conversations and perspectives added by the community's rich experiences.

There are several limitations to the PIT Count and the HMIS data used in this report. Given these limitations, the data provided in this report should not be viewed as exact numbers, but rather a useful tool that can be used to estimate characteristics of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg homeless population and broadly gauge changes in the homeless population over time (see "Limitations" section for more details).

Data & Methodology

This report compiles data from several sources to help describe and contextualize those experiencing homelessness in Charlotte on a given night and over the course of a year.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT (PIT)

2014-2015

The PIT Count is a federally mandated data collection by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for communities receiving federal funds through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants Program. There are two components to the PIT Count using HUD's definition of homeless: a sheltered count of how many people are in shelters (transitional housing or emergency and seasonal shelter) and an unsheltered count of how many people are living in places unfit for human habitation (e.g. streets, camps, abandoned buildings) on a given night in January. The 2014 PIT Count took place on the night of January 29, 2014 and the 2015 PIT Count took place on the night of January 28, 2015.

HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS)

2014-2015

HMIS data provide an unduplicated count of people who experienced homelessness and sought shelter or services over the course of a year at agencies receiving certain federal funding. For 2015, Charlotte-Mecklenburg HMIS data were obtained through HUD's Homelessness Data Exchange website and national data were obtained from the 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. The 2015 HMIS data are from October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015. The 2014 HMIS data are from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014.

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA

This report presents PIT Count data and HMIS data from 2015 with supplemental data from the ACS and the 2015 AHAR to provide context where appropriate. Due to data quality issues, comparisons are not made longitudinally. Together, these data sources can help the community better advocate for additional federal, state, and local resources to provide services for the homeless population.

PIT Count vs. HMIS

It is important to distinguish between the PIT Count and HMIS data. The Point-in-Time Count (PIT) takes a census of an estimated number of the homeless population (sheltered and unsheltered) on a given night, while the HMIS data are collected throughout the year and provides a count of the number of people experiencing homelessness in an emergency shelter or transitional housing. As a result, the estimates provided by the PIT Count will be smaller than those provided by the HMIS data. There are several key differences between the Charlotte-Mecklenburg PIT data and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg HMIS data that are used in this report. These differences are described in the table below.

	PIT COUNT	HMIS
DESCRIPTION	An estimate of the number of people, sheltered and unsheltered, experiencing homelessness on a given night in January	Provides information on the characteristics and service utilization of people who are homeless in a shelter throughout a year based on data entered into the HMIS data system by agencies
DATE RANGE OF ESTIMATE	A given night in January	Fiscal year (October 1 – September 30)
POPULATION	Sheltered and unsheltered	Sheltered only
SEASONAL CHANGES	Occurs in winter (January). Does not capture seasonality of homelessness	Captures all seasons
HOUSEHOLD TYPES	Households with children, households without children, child only households, unaccompanied youth, veterans, and chronically homeless population	Households with children, households without children, and veterans
DUPLICATION	Unduplicated by household type and shelter type	Unduplicated within each shelter type/household type combination (e.g. emergency shelter individuals). However there is a small, undeterminable amount of duplication across shelter and household types if a person experienced homelessness in both emergency shelter and transitional housing or as part of both a household with adults and children and as an individual.

Limitations

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT (PIT)

- Count is a one-night estimate and trends should be interpreted with caution.
- Housing type definitions and classifications may change.
- Uses the HUD definition of homelessness, which might differ from other definitions of homelessness that are broader (e.g. other definitions include doubled up as homeless.)
- Self-reported data have reliability issues and not all people answer these questions.
- Undercount of people experiencing homelessness.

CHAR.-MECK. HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS)

- Data from HMIS are provided in aggregate from the HUD HDX site. These data are unduplicated by shelter type and household type but not across the entire system. As a result, the numbers presented in the report will reflect some duplication if a person utilized both emergency shelter and transitional housing or experienced homelessness as an individual and as part of a household with a child.
- Agencies and capacity of agencies may change over time, impacting the number of people served.
- Due to data quality, all numbers and trends should be viewed as estimates.
- Given data quality, the length of service utilization cannot be determined at this time.
- Self-reported data have reliability issues and not all people answer these questions.
- Data on the number of people in a household were not accurate for 2015 and could not be reported for certain housing types.
- While the majority of agencies that provide emergency shelter or transitional housing input data into HMIS, there are a few that do not, and as result their data are not captured.

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS)

- The ACS provides data on a sample of the Mecklenburg County population, which means there is a margin of error, or range in which the true value might actually reside, so comparisons should be made with caution.

2015 ANNUAL HOMELESS ASSESSMENT REPORT (AHAR)

- Because the data come from across the U.S., data are included on urban, suburban, and rural communities that may not be similar demographically to Mecklenburg County.

Summary

In Mecklenburg County in 2015

The table below summarizes the data from the PIT Count and HMIS data for 2015 with details on the change since 2014. Note that because these data sources are slightly different, direct comparisons should not be made across them.

▲ = Increase ▼ = Decrease ■ = Little to no change

	PIT		HMIS
	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Sheltered ¹
OVERALL	180 ▲10% (16) from 2014	1,821 ▼2% (29) from 2014	6,511 ² ■0.20% (13) from 2014
INDIVIDUALS ³	180 ▲10% (363) from 2014	1051 ▲16% (25) from 2014	4106 ▲2% (21) from 2014
PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH ADULTS & CHILDREN	0 ▼100% (9) from 2014	758 ▼7% (53) from 2014	2,405 ▼13% (350) from 2014
VETERANS	25 ▲67% (10) from 2014	160 ▼13% (18) from 2014	442 ▼6% (27) from 2014

¹ The overall estimate has a small, but undeterminable overlap. (i.e. individuals who received both emergency and transitional shelter services are counted twice in the aggregate numbers presented here)

² The overall estimate has a small, but undeterminable overlap. In addition to the overlap of individuals utilizing both emergency shelter and transitional housing services, there is also potential overlap for an individual experiencing homelessness both as an individual and another time in a household with an adult and child.

³ The PIT Count and HMIS data use different definitions for individuals. The PIT Count refers to households with only adults. The HMIS data refer to person who is not part of a family with children during an episode of homelessness. Individuals may be homeless as single adults, unaccompanied youth, or in multiple-adult or multiple-child households.

2015 Overview⁴

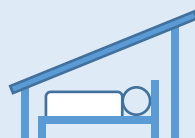
In Mecklenburg County in 2015

Homeless on one night (PIT)



180

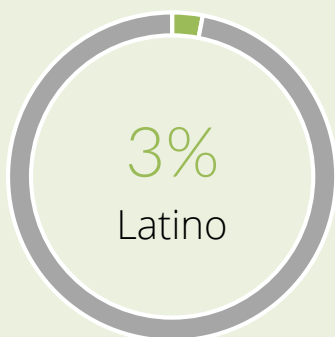
Unsheltered people



1,821

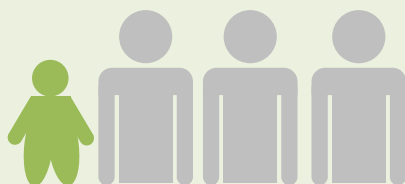
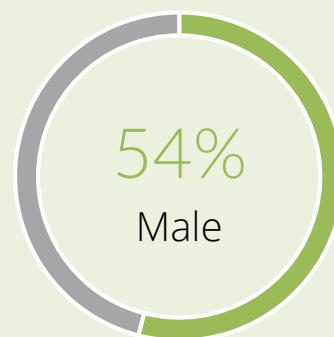
Sheltered people

Sheltered at some point during the year (HMIS)⁵



6,511

Sheltered people



1 in 4 people
were under the age of 18



4 in 5 people
identified as Black

⁴ For more detailed data please see the Appendix

⁵ The overall estimate has a small, but undeterminable overlap. (i.e. individuals who received emergency and transitional shelter services are counted twice in the aggregate number presented here)

Individuals

In Mecklenburg County in 2015

PIT DEFINITION: Single adults and adult couples unaccompanied by children.

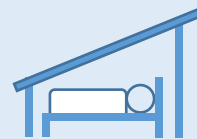
HMIS DEFINITION: A person who is not part of a family with children during an episode of homelessness. Individuals may be homeless as single adults, unaccompanied youth, or in multiple-adult or multiple-child households.

Homeless on one night (PIT)



180

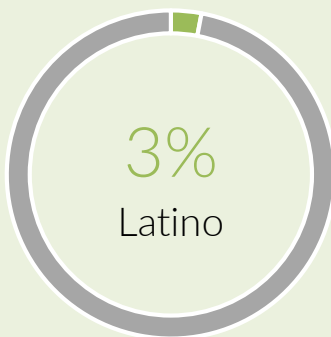
Unsheltered people



1,051

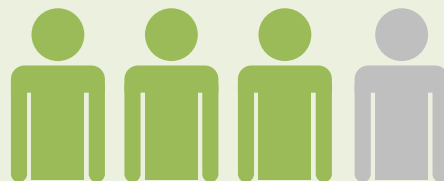
Sheltered people

Sheltered at some point during the year (HMIS)⁶

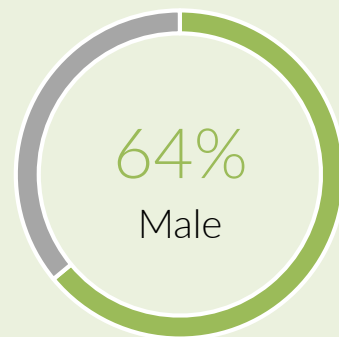


4,106

Sheltered people



3 out of 4 people
identified as Black



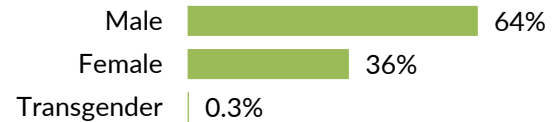
⁶ The overall estimate has a small, but undeterminable overlap. (i.e. individuals who received both emergency and transitional shelter services are counted twice in the aggregate number presented here)

GENDER

- ▶ In 2015, people who identified as male represented 64% (2,619) of the sheltered homeless population in households without children, compared to 36% (1,456) who identified as female. 0.3% (12) identified as transgender.

Majority of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness identify as male

Gender, 2015



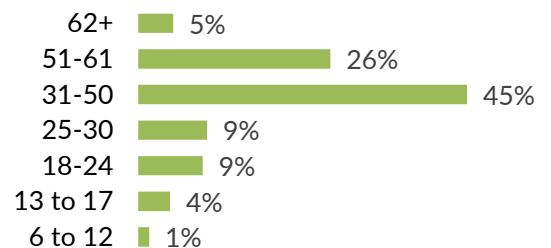
N=4,087

AGE

- ▶ In 2015, the majority of people in households without children who were sheltered were between the ages of 31 to 50 (45%).
- ▶ Adults 18-30 represent 18% of sheltered households without children, and those age 51 to 61 represent 26%.
- ▶ Adults 62+ made up 5% of people in households without children who were sheltered in 2015.

Majority of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness were ages 31 to 50

Age, 2015



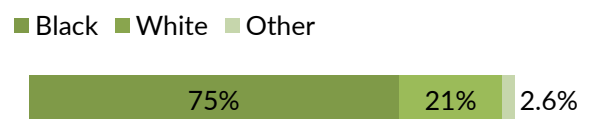
N=4,106

RACE

- ▶ Three out of every four people (75%) who were in sheltered homeless households without children were Black in 2015, which is slightly lower than the proportion of people who identify as Black in the overall sheltered homeless population in Charlotte-Mecklenburg (82%).

Three out of four individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness identify as Black

Race, 2015



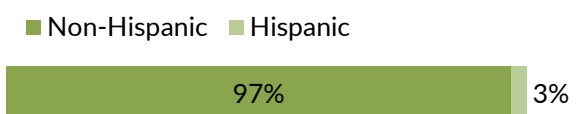
N=4,075

ETHNICITY

- ▶ The majority (97%) of people in households without children who were sheltered were non-Hispanic in 2015, which is consistent with the overall sheltered homeless population.

Majority of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness were non-Hispanic

Ethnicity, 2015

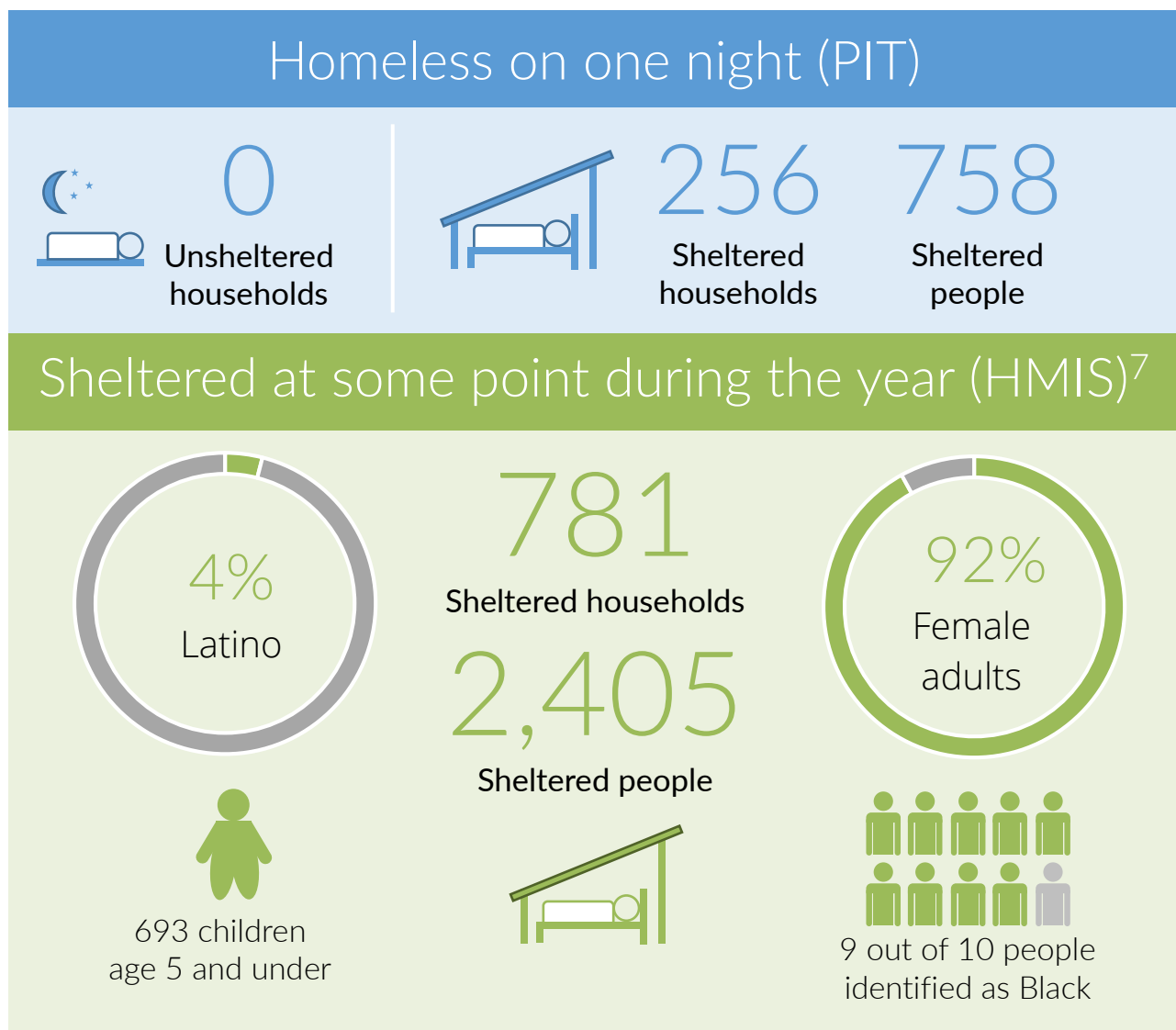


N=4,037

Households with **Adults & Children**

In Mecklenburg County in 2015

DEFINITION: People who are homeless as part of households that have at least one adult and one child.



⁷ The overall estimate has a small, but undeterminable overlap. (i.e. families who received both emergency and transitional shelter services are counted twice in the aggregate number presented here)

GENDER

- In 2015, the majority (92%) of sheltered adults in households with children were women.

Note: The number of people identifying as transgender is too small to report.

Majority of sheltered adults in households with children identified as women.

Gender, 2015



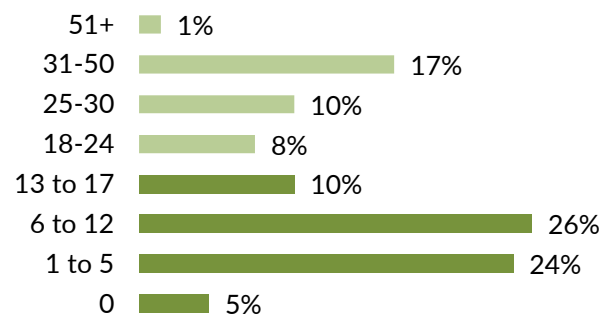
N=2,389

AGE

- In 2015, approximately 64% (1,548) of people in sheltered homeless households with children were under the age of 18. Of those children, 693 (29%) were under the age of 6 and 855 (36%) were 6 to 17.
- Of the adults, 18% (423) were 18 to 30, 17% (398 people) were 31 to 50, and the remaining 1% were over 50.

1,548 Children experienced sheltered homelessness with an adult.

Age, 2015



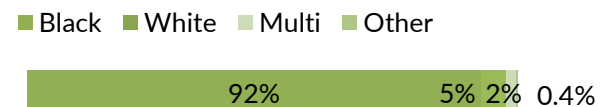
N=2,389

RACE

- In 2015, the majority (92%) of people in sheltered homeless households with children were Black.

Majority of people in sheltered households with children identified as Black.

Race, 2015



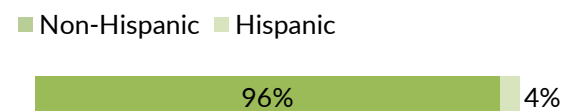
N=2,386

ETHNICITY

- In 2015, the estimated share of people in sheltered homeless households with children in Mecklenburg County who identified as non-Hispanic was 96%.

Majority of sheltered adults in households with children were non-Hispanic.

Ethnicity, 2015



N=2,381

Veteran Households

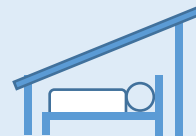
In Mecklenburg County in 2015

DEFINITION: A person self-identifying as having served in the military, regardless of discharge type.

Homeless on one night (PIT)

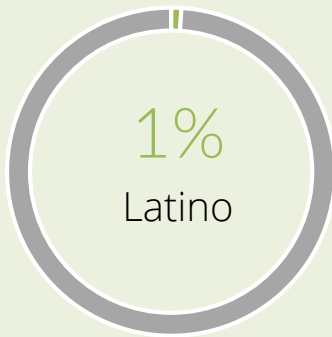


25
Unsheltered veterans

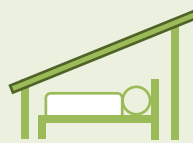


160
Sheltered veterans

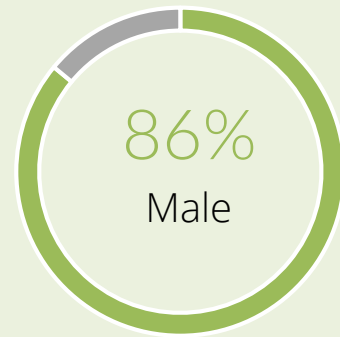
Sheltered at some point during the year (HMIS)⁸



442
Sheltered veterans



3 out of 4 veterans
identified as Black



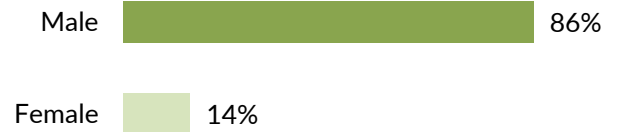
⁸ The overall estimate has a small, but undeterminable overlap. (i.e. individuals who received both emergency and transitional shelter services are counted twice in the aggregate number presented here)

GENDER

- ▶ The majority (86%) of sheltered homeless veterans in Charlotte-Mecklenburg identified as male in 2015. This is slightly lower than the 2015 estimate of sheltered veterans nationally, where 91% identified as male in 2015 and is also slightly lower than the overall Mecklenburg County veteran population, where 89% of people identified as male in 2015.

Majority of sheltered veterans identified as male

Gender, 2015



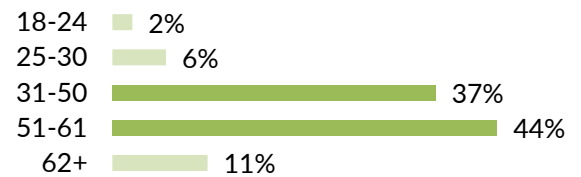
N=378

AGE

- ▶ Approximately 8 out of every 10 veterans were between the ages of 31 and 61 in 2015.
- ▶ The proportion of homeless sheltered veterans over the age of 62 (11%) is lower than the Mecklenburg county population, which was about 13% in 2015.

8 out of 10 veterans were ages 31 to 61

Age, 2015



N=442

RACE

- ▶ Approximately 3 out of every 4 (76%) veterans were Black in 2015.
- ▶ The proportion of the Mecklenburg County homeless sheltered veteran population that identified as Black in 2015 is disproportionate when compared to the overall Mecklenburg County veteran population, which was approximately 30% Black, and the share of the overall U.S. sheltered homeless veteran population which was approximately 39% Black in 2015, according to the 2015 AHAR report.

3 out of 4 veterans identified as Black

Race, 2015

■ Black ■ White ■ Multi ■ Other



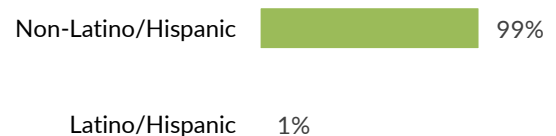
N=442

ETHNICITY

- ▶ Few veterans identified as Latino or Hispanic in 2015, which is comparable to the U.S. Veteran population.
- ▶ The proportion of homeless sheltered Latino/Hispanic Veterans in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is slightly lower than the share in the sheltered U.S. veteran population, which was 8% according to the 2015 AHAR report.

99% of veterans did not identify as Latino or Hispanic

Ethnicity, 2015



N=437